

## **CALL IN to Scrutiny Committee made on 7.3.2019**

### **Related to documents 3.19:**

#### **Decision Under Delegated Powers - West Wight School Place Planning**

**Cabinet member approves consultation being undertaken on review as set out in the report with preferred option to close All Saints Primary and expand St Saviours to be implemented by September 2019**

### **REASONS FOR CALL IN:**

*With relation to the IW Council Constitution 3.1 Principles of Decision Making (specifically iv, viii, x, xi, xii)*

#### **1. OPTIONS**

The options considered in the report Executive study are not comprehensive and very limited in scope. This is a strategic report with a focus on the whole of the West Wight which includes 5 primary schools: only two are listed in the options which have been considered, thus proper advice, consultation and consideration of all options (constitution 3.1 iv, viii, xii) has not been adhered to and it is contrary to the constitution.

#### **2. QUALITY OF THE CONSULTATION**

The FAQ document issued as part of the formal consultation on All Saints School has the background metadata which clearly shows its origin in terms of title and creator is from a completely different consultation on a school closure in Farnborough – most specifically Oak Farm Community School. This puts into question the local awareness, specific knowledge of the West Wight and how targeted the proposal is for the Isle of Wight. For example in the FAQ “St Saviour’s Primary School is the nearest school to All Saint’s Primary School” (p2) may well be correct but local awareness and knowledge identifies that that the safest walking route for the children of Freshwater is to Yarmouth, not to St Saviours – the quality of the walking route is more valid to the decision making process than the distance.

#### **3. INCORRECT DATA AND STATISTICS**

The document is full of inaccuracies, incorrect data and omissions of important judgements in relations to pupil test scores and quoted OFSTED conclusions to the detriment of All Saints in comparison to other local schools.

##### **FOR EXAMPLE:**

FAQ says: "All Saints' CE Primary School has a continuous track record of weak educational performance over several years and there are insufficient indications that rapid and sustainable improvement is likely. It also has a long-standing relatively weak reputation in the community relative to neighbouring schools."

OFSTED (July 2018) actually says: "*The progress that pupils make in key stage 1 has significantly improved. This year, by the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in reading is in line with the most recent national average. Although*

*the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected level in mathematics and writing remains below the national averages, it is considerably better than in 2017, when no pupils achieved the expected level in these two subjects."*

*OFSTED also says "New staff have been appointed to the school with good subject knowledge in phonics and mathematics. Their improved practice is evident across the school, with most pupils in Year 1 now achieving the required level in phonics. The teaching of phonics and spelling has been further strengthened by the effective use of additional help for the pupils who need it. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making better progress from their starting points."*

There is little to no analysis or comparison with the current standards in other local, West Wight schools. For instance in table 3 (p3) of the FAQ 50% of All Saints pupils achieved ARE (Age Related Expectations) in 2018 compared with 40% at Brighstone.

#### **4. OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY**

Relating to the IW Council constitution (3.1 x, xi, xii) there is a 'presumption in favour of openness.' The report fails to adhere to this fully. For instance, where in the report is there a listing of the land ownership at all 5 school sites in the West Wight? Ownership of land is clearly a leading factor when it comes to making strategic decisions. If transparency and openness is a key element of the constitution, any consultation should include full disclosure of landowners and interested parties for all 5 school sites in the West Wight.

#### **5. CARBON EMISSIONS**

There is no analysis in the documentation of the increase in CO2 emissions through closing a school which an entire village can safely walk their children to, instead forcing parents and families to use vehicles to access education. This is contrary to all best practice, all strategic planning documents, and the current move towards next zero emissions by 2030 by Councils across the UK. The IW Council have made declarations to reduce carbon emissions, and all planning applications are tested for their sustainability of transport and environmental impact. The closure of a school is a strategic decision and the wider impact must be assessed: increased vehicle use, congestion on the roads, parking, access, child safety and carbon emissions.

#### **6. DECISION MAKER ON ISSUE OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE**

Appendix 1 of the initial report states "Decision by June 2019 – EME if no objections, Cabinet if there are." (EME = Executive Member for Education, Cllr Brading). The closure of the only school in one of the largest villages in the Isle of Wight has an impact which is not limited to an education portfolio. The closure of a school has consequences in terms of planning, development and resources. The Cabinet portfolio covers areas of Forward Planning, Infrastructure, Health, Transport, Resources, Regeneration, Housing and Community will all be directly impacted by this decision. Therefore, Cabinet members under all the portfolios are needed to make a full and considered decision; the decision is too comprehensive to be left to one executive member. Any proposal to close a school

in such a central hub to the community of West Wight and the Isle of Wight should be made at least by the Cabinet if not by the Full Council.

#### **DESIRED OUTCOMES:**

1. That the IW Council withdraws their proposal to close All Saints School with such a limited timeframe of September 2019
2. That the IW Council undertakes a comprehensive report - based on correct and factual evidence, statistics, data, carbon emissions and listing of land ownership – to look at both school places in the West Wight and the Isle of Wight as a whole
3. That the IW Council in future reports considers the full and comprehensive range of options for all West Wight schools including (but not limited to) federation of an additional 2 schools, federation of all 5 schools, new building, reduced pupil numbers (PAN) at some schools, alternative land use on sites for education use.
4. That decisions to close a school of such strategic importance to the local community must be made at a Cabinet or Full Council level and not delegated to one portfolio.

#### **AREAS OF THE CONSTITUTION WHICH ARE RELEVANT:**

“The Council Decision Making Process” (p167+)

#### **3. Principles of decision making**

##### **3.1**

(iv) Proper advice is taken and considered before the decision is reached

(viii) due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers

(x) presumption in favour of openness

(xi) clarity of aims and desired outcomes

(xii) due consideration of all available options

(xiii) that the protocols and procedures contained in the protocol on decision making and the consultation protocol between parish/town councils and the Isle of Wight Council appended to this constitution have been followed

#### **7. The call in procedure**

Call in can be requested if concerns were raised following the publication of an agenda item and were not taken into account

##### **7.3 Submission of call in notice**

Shall be sent by paper or electronic means to the proper officer who may reject it after consultation with the chairman of scrutiny if 'insufficient detail has been given about the reason for call-in and the desired outcomes'

"On receipt of a call in notice the proper officer will stop implementation of the decision and consult with all relevant parties on the calling of a meeting of the relevant scrutiny committee to consider the matter. "

#### 7.7 Action that can be taken by the committee in relation to a call-in

- (i) accept the decision made by the cabinet member taking effect immediately
- (ii) accept the decision but take recommendations
- (iii) accept the decision and review at a later date
- (iv) Refer the decision back to the cabinet member with recommendations